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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5019
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1821
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4574
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1943
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2627
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0778
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 000934

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: CONTINUED TENSIONS IN PAPUA

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: A Mission team visited Papua Province in eastern Indonesia, May 5-9. Papuan interlocutors complained heatedly about the GOI and its failure to implement autonomy provisions for the region. Local officials admitted that implementation of autonomy was slow, but asserted that they are making progress on the development side. Governor Suebu's health problems, however, are having an impact on governance in the region.

[12](#). (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): Pol/C--while underscoring the USG's full support for Indonesia's territorial integrity--underlined the need to implement autonomy plans and noted concern about several human rights cases. Pol/C also spoke about the U.S. election process to a group of university students. Based on our soundings, the Papua region is as restive as ever. END SUMMARY.

[13](#). (C) An interagency Mission team visited locations throughout Papua May 5-9. This message reports on Pol/C's meetings in the provincial capital of Jayapura, May 8-9. Septel will report on poloff's visits to three other areas in the province. DAO reporting will cover meetings with military officials in the province.

DEEP FRUSTRATION

[14](#). (C) Papuan interlocutors were deeply frustrated over the political situation. Chair of the Papuan Provincial Legislature (DPR-P) John Ibo told Pol/C that Papuan are angry over the slow implementation of the province's Special Autonomy Law. (Note: The GOI promulgated the Papua Special Autonomy Law in 2001. Under the law, the province takes over all areas of government authority except for foreign affairs, defense and security, etc.) Ibo charged that the central government had shown no real commitment to implement Special Autonomy and that many Papuans regard the law as a total failure.

[15](#). (C) According to Ibo and other Papuan contacts, this

frustration has led many Papuans to sympathize with the separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM), although very few support violent action against the Indonesian state. (Note: Several contacts commented that the OPM--which operates underground--enjoys strong support among many Papuans.) Pol/C underlined full USG support for the territorial integrity of Indonesia and urged that Papuans continue to act in a constructive, non-violent manner.

¶6. (C) Ibo also criticized Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu's efforts to develop the province. He said the Governor's village-based development plan--which included payments of 100 million Rupiah (approximately 11,000 USD) to individual villages for small-scale development projects--had failed to produce tangible benefits for people in rural areas. (Note: Ibo lost to Suebu in the 2006 gubernatorial election and has frequently criticized the governor ever since.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT -- "WE'RE TRYING"

¶7. (C) Pol/C reviewed local government priorities in a May 8 meeting with Provincial Secretary Tedjo Soeprapto, the number-three official in the province. (Note: Both the Governor and Vice-Governor were outside of Jayapura and were not available for a meeting.) Soeprapto underscored that the Provincial Government was committed to implementing Special Autonomy and promoting economic development in Papua. The Provincial Government had identified education, health and infrastructure as key development priorities. A focus on these areas was necessary to bring economic benefits to a region where approximately 80 percent of families live below the poverty line.

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¶8. (C) Soeprapto conceded, however, that progress was slow. A chief problem still hampering the government, he noted, was the legacy of "past traumas." Papua's history of separatist activity and the sometimes harsh response by security forces in the past had left people deeply distrustful of the central government. Like other officials, however, Soeprapto minimized these problems as "a residue of the past," and said the military had now changed its approach and fully supported the government's development plans. Soeprapto cautioned against expecting rapid progress given Papua's problematic history and the massive challenges the region faces.

REVIEWING HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

¶9. (C) Pol/C also raised several human rights cases with Soeprapto and with the Provincial Police Commander Max Aer, including:

--The criminal prosecution of human rights activist Sabar Iwanggin for allegedly sending text messages claiming a GOI plot to poison Papuans;

--The criminal prosecution of Papuan students who raised the "Morning Star" Flag--which the GOI considers a separatist symbol--during a peaceful rally; and,

--The banning of a book by Papuan author Sendus Wonda that alleged that the GOI deliberately introduced HIV/AIDS in the province in order to kill ethnic Papuans.

These cases represented significant setbacks for human rights and freedom of expression in Papua and were inconsistent with Indonesia's transformation to democracy, Pol/C emphasized.

¶10. (C) Soeprapto acknowledged that there were still human rights problems in the province although the situation had improved compared with the past. He specifically noted that the Indonesian military (TNI) continued to take a hard-line on separatist symbols like the Morning Star Flag. Provincial Government leaders continued to meet with TNI officials to reach an understanding of what Papuan symbols were

permissible. He also noted that prosecutors in Jakarta made the decision to ban Sendus Wonda's book; the provincial government had no problem with the book and other books of the same type were available in local bookstores.

¶11. (C) Police Chief Aer outlined the steps his forces were taking to improve the human rights situation in the province.

The police in Papua had begun to implement community-policing strategies and now provide human rights training to all police personnel. Another problem, according to Aer, was that the majority of police still come from outside of Papua and do not understand the local culture. To remedy the situation, the police instituted a program to recruit more ethnic Papuans. Approximately 250 new personnel enter the police in Papua every year; the majority are now ethnic Papuans.

¶12. (C) Aer also explained that the police were working with the national human rights commission (Komnas HAM) to socialize officers regarding the proper treatment of prisoners. Komnas HAM also cooperates with the police in the investigation of alleged human rights abuses. Despite these steps, however, many Papuans continue to harbor a deep distrust of the security forces, he admitted.

GOVERNOR'S HEALTH A FACTOR

¶13. (C) Governor Suebu's health problems are also a factor. Key Suebu advisor Agus Sumule told poloff that the Governor underwent coronary angioplasty in Singapore in early April. The procedure was successful and Suebu is adhering to a regimen of diet and exercise prescribed by his doctors. However, he has not been in Jayapura much and he has cut his

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regular working hours nearly in half. Over all, he is playing a less active role in the day-to-day administration of the province. Much of the Provincial Government's progress on development and Special Autonomy has been due to the personal efforts of Suebu and his key advisors. He is also the key interlocutor between the Papuan Provincial Government and President Yudhoyono, Vice President Kalla and other senior officials in Jakarta. Suebu's diminished activity is certain to slow progress on the Provincial Government's priorities, such as implementing Special Autonomy and enacting provincial development plans.

PUBLIC OUTREACH WITH STUDENTS

¶14. (U) Pol/C spoke to approximately 100 students at Jayapura's Cendrawasih University on the subject of the U.S. Presidential Election. Pol/C explained the U.S. Election process and answered a range of questions from the very engaged, knowledgeable group of students, most of whom were Papuan.

AS RESTIVE AS EVER

¶15. (C) Based on our soundings, Papua is as tense as ever. Papuans remain deeply unhappy with Jakarta, feeling that their needs are being ignored, especially regarding the implementation of autonomy provisions. On a deeper level, however, Papuans clearly feel deeply estranged from the rest of Indonesia. Several Papuans noted to us that they feel much closer socially and culturally to neighboring Papua New Guinea as compared with Java or Sumatra. USG policy which involves urging implementation of Special Autonomy, a focus on development and respect for human rights is on target, and indeed the GOI has made progress regarding human rights. That said, the GOI clearly needs to focus much more on the Papuan region or it could well face even more serious political problems down the road.

HUME